

Human Trafficking Scenarios

Check Your Understanding – Directions: Do you think that a friend, or even yourself, could get tricked into becoming a victim of human trafficking? Do you know the signs that you are being preyed upon by a trafficker? Read through the scenarios below and underline the red flags that would let you know that something about the situation is not right.

Scenario 1: Older Boyfriend

Your friend, Ashley, has recently started dating an older guy, Josiah, who is in his early 20s. Your friend is excited and you are excited for her because the guy is really hot, treats her like an adult, and even buys her expensive items. In fact, you are a little jealous when she tells you that Josiah asked her to be his girlfriend only after a few weeks, and they are going to go to Seattle next Saturday to celebrate. You are lucky that you even know about the celebration; lately Ashley has spent less and less time with her friends and the majority of her time is spent with Josiah or texting him. When you asked her last week if you guys could go to the movie you both have been wanting to see forever, she said she had to check with Josiah first. Later, when she texted, she just said that she couldn't go; that Josiah and her had plans. In the months to follow, Josiah takes Ashley out-of-town every weekend. Ashley is beginning to look tired and not so happy.

Scenario 2: Online Friend

Your friend, Ben, has been talking to other people outside of his network of friends on Facebook. One of the newest people he has been talking to is this girl in her early twenties. Ben's new friend's name is Jen; she lives in a town near ours and has her own apartment. Lately, their conversations have turned more sexual. Just last week, Jen took it to a whole new level when she sent Ben nude pictures of herself. She convinced Ben to send similar pictures to her and to meet at her apartment. You are not sure what happened when they met for the first time, because Ben won't say much about his meeting with Jen. He just says that Jen isn't who he thought she would be and that he wishes he had never started talking to her, and he really wishes he hadn't sent her the pictures. Jen told Ben that if he doesn't continue their relationship, she would post his pictures online.

Scenario 3: Modeling Scout

Your friend, Jessica, met an older guy at the mall about three weeks ago. He approached her when she was walking out of Hollister. He said that he was with a modeling agency in California and that she had that look that the modeling industry wants. The modeling scout gave her a business card and showed her pictures of the other models who worked for the agency he works for. He even mentioned that if Jessica was as good as he thought she could be he may even be able to reach out to people he knows in Hollywood to get her an audition for a movie or something. Jessica said that the guy pulled out his phone and showed her pictures of him with a bunch of different stars. Jessica took his card and has been communicating with him over text. Just today, the modeling scout texted her that she would need to travel to California over the weekend for an interview, and not to worry, her parents didn't need to be there; she could surprise them later when she secured her first job as a model. He told Jessica to call him later so they could work out the details for her flight to California.

Scenario 4: Traveling Sales Job

Your friend, James, met an older lady at the restaurant he works at waiting tables. Her name was Susan and she was there eating with a couple of friends. Susan kept complimenting James, throughout the meal, on how good of a worker he is. At one point, when they were paying their bill, Susan handed James a business card and told him that she was part of a company that helped young adults build their work experience through a sales type job. Susan said that James could be part of sales crew that traveled from city-to-city, and even state-to-state, selling items. Not only would James gain great sales experience for future jobs or even college applications by joining the sales crew, he would also be earning a good amount of money that he could save for college or whatever he would like. Also, the idea of traveling around and getting to see different areas is appealing to James.

Scenario 5: Only Once...

Your best friend since the third grade, Megan, started dating a new guy about four months ago. The guy's name is Brandon and he is known around school as a gang member. While you worry about what Megan may be exposed to by dating a gang member, you trust her to take care of herself, and besides, she really likes the guy and they go out and do all the normal stuff teenagers do. In the last week, however, you have noticed that Megan has looked really sad. She really won't tell you much; she just says she's tired. Brandon and Megan seem to still be going out and hanging out all the time, and she seems happy enough around him. But something seems off. When you press Megan for more information on what is going on, she finally admits that Brandon convinced her to strip dance at a party the gang threw. He told her that she would earn a bunch of money on tips and that would be helpful to him, too. He has been having car problems and the cash would help fix the car that he uses to take them all over the place. He further convinced her by telling her that if she loved and cared about him, she would do it for him. Brandon told her it would just be the one time, but Megan said that he asked her to do it again this weekend.

Scenario 6: Weekend Trips

Your friend Matt has been spending a lot of weekends away from home with his stepbrother David. They have been going to places like Vegas, Portland, and Seattle to see the sights and hang out. Last weekend they even caught a Seahawks game in Seattle. When I asked Matt how they are paying for it all, Matt said that is stepbrother makes good money being an escort for people in the cities they visit. Supposedly, David gets paid to just hang out with people and be there friend or something. In fact, David lines Matt up to be an escort for the next month, so he can make a bunch of money, too. After a month goes by, you notice that Matt doesn't seem so happy about their weekend excursions anymore. In fact, you notice that Matt has some bruises on his arms and one on his cheek. At first, Matt says he got in a fight with someone this weekend, but when you don't believe him, he admits that David beat on him after he told him that he wanted out of the escort business. When asked what being an escort is really all about, Matt won't tell you and walks away.

Revisit – Check Your Understanding – Directions: After you go through the Human Trafficking training, go back to the scenarios above and determine if you have missed any indicators. Circle any additional indicators you are now aware of.